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A Nation In Sorrow

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A Nation in its Sorrow.

A Nation in its Sorrow:

TWO SERMONS

PREACHED IN GRACE CHURCH,

NEW YORK,

BY

HENRY C. POTTER, D.D.

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SOME LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

OF

THE PRAYER DAY

FOR THE

PRESIDENT.

(Preached Sunday Morning, Sept. 11th, 1881.)

He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? or He that made the eye, shall He not see?—PSALM xciv, 9 (PSALTER.)

There are two ideas of God, which are held to-day by thinking men of different minds, with equal sincerity and tenacity.

The one regards Him as a Force or Power, behind nature, in which it takes its rise or finds its origin. The school which admits nothing that it cannot demonstrate has not thus far, if we are to believe its most candid teachers, succeeded in demonstrating that life is self-evolved, and since this cannot be demonstrated, it is not unwilling to admit that there may be, somewhere, some Force which, for want of a better name, may be called God, and in which man as we know him, and things as we see them, take their rise. But the most that it is willing to admit concerning this Force or Power, is that it is a Force or Power that "makes for righteousness," an influence—a tendency—a law, if you please, the result of whose operations is in the direction of good rather than evil. That this influence, or tendency, or force, is a Personal BEING—that it is affected by our appeals to it—that it hears a request which we make to it, or answers what we call our prayers, this it explicitly denies.

And it does so for two reasons: first, that if God be such a Being as it understands him to be, he can-

not answer prayer, and then, that as a matter of experience, He does not. If, in other words, God be simply another name for law, then it is not of the nature of law to operate by mere caprice. But that would be caprice, and not law, which should effect one thing to-day from its own impulse, and another to-morrow because somebody asked it to. In fact, however, this impersonal theory of God is best of all demonstrated (its disciples maintain) by experience, since experience furnishes no consistent argument for believing in a personal God who hears and answers prayer. Observe that the phrase is "no consistent argument;" since the disciple of an impersonal Force or Power, as being all that we know as God, does not deny that there are coincidences between men's prayers and subsequent events, such as look like an answer, on the part of the Being to whom those prayers were addressed, to their requests. But these he explains by maintaining that they are no more than coincidences, and that they are offset by innumerable instances where prayer has been persistently and utterly disregarded. Ships have gone down in mid-ocean, and men have cried to God for succor as they never cried before. But, as with the priests of Baal crying for hours together to their God, "O Baal hear us!" so here, there was "no voice, nor any that answered, nor any that regarded." Good men have prayed, and prayed for reasonable things. A parent has asked for his boy, not wealth, nor eminence, nor cleverness, but only a sanctified character, and has seen him go down, smitten and accursed, into a drunkard's grave. A widow has cried to heaven, not for ease or luxury,

but only for her daily bread, and has been hastened to a premature grave by the employer who starved and robbed, because he could not corrupt her. The heavens have seemed as brass to sufferers who lifted thitherward their prayer and have seemed to get no answer back. "Let us have done, then," says the students of all these things, "with your dogma of a Personal God, and most of all with the notion that He does anything in this world because any man or woman asks Him to."

And yet, that other school to which I began by referring, will not have done with such a notion, nor refrain from acting upon it. There are hours in every one's life when prayer seems almost a mockery, and God almost a myth. And at such times the arguments against both which I have referred to, seem potent, if not conclusive. But there are other hours and other eras, when the conviction of a man or a nation is a very different one. And this is not because at such a time one can tabulate statistics which demonstrate God's disposition to be influenced by men's prayers, nor because the difficulty of answering a great many prayers in the way that a great many people expect them to be answered is not seen and recognized. But at such times such persons remember this : that if it be granted that man is a creature of imperfect knowledge—that he is apt to want a great many things that are not good for him, and that he is apt to want things that are good for him, selfishly, and without regard to the welfare of other people—if it be still further true that, in the case of a child who comes with his petition to you, you serve him best, oftentimes, by denying, rather

than by granting his request, then, certainly, nothing is proved as against prayer by insisting that, in certain emergencies, certain requests were denied instead of being granted. Said a missionary bishop once, "Soon after I went to my missionary jurisdiction, I wanted twenty thousand dollars, with which to build five cheap churches in as many growing towns. Oh, how I prayed and prayed for it, but, thank God, it never came! Yes, thank God; for in six months the population of these five mining towns had moved away, and then I saw that if I had had it the money would have been simply wasted by me, and that God knew better than I did."

And in that plain and homely sentence there is the essence of the whole matter. "God knew better" than the bishop did. Do you suppose he stopped praying, this missionary bishop, because he did not get his twenty thousand dollars? No, his faith went down a great deal deeper than that! He believed first that God knew—that is, that He took account of what His servant was doing for His truth out in those mining towns, and was interested in it. And it is that conviction, far more than any visible or particular answer to prayer, which has been the spring of it ever since the world began. There are men, as I have said, who believe that God is a mere force, or law, or soulless tendency. But there are other men who believe that He is a living Father, and the strongest argument for that faith they find, after all, in themselves. There is no more magnificent statement of that argument than we find in the 94th Psalm. It was written in a time of cruel oppression, when wickedness stalked unabashed in high

places, and when the earlier fear of God had died out from the breasts of even the rulers of Israel themselves. There were men who ought to have protected the weak, who used their power to outrage them. And so David cries out, telling up this infamy to God, "They smite down thy people, O Lord, and trouble thine heritage. They murder the widow and the stranger, and put the fatherless to death. And yet they say, 'Tush, the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.'" And then comes that swift reply, which, as Herder has said, is as pertinent to the faithless philosophy of our own day as of David's day, "O, ye fools, when will ye understand? He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? and He that made the eye, shall He not see?" You have in yourselves a power that sees and hears. Where did you get it? What does it imply, if not that, somewhere, there is One who hears with an unerring ear, and sees with an all-searching eye? Be sure that whatever comes to pass here in the world, there is one Being who sees and knows it all, and who is no indifferent spectator of the wrongs and sorrows of His children. Do not forget Him, or leave him out of account; but rather remind yourself how your own nature is at once the image and witness of His. You see and hear. Be sure that He, whose child you are, sees and hears you!

It is that larger truth which is implied in these words of David's, of which we have lately been having such interesting evidence in connection with our stricken and suffering President. A great calamity, with elements in it which furnish motives for abundant self-scrutiny and mortification has brought this

people to its knees with an earnestness and unanimity which are wholly without a parallel. These last seventy days have been an era of tender sympathy and earnest prayer which will always be memorable and precious. And both these characteristics are to me an evidence for the being and character of Him who, as I am profoundly persuaded, has inspired them.

(*a.*) Look, for instance, at the tokens of universal sympathy. I do not know how it may have been with most of us, but I think there is more than one here who must own that he could hardly read that story of the journey of the President from the capital to the seaside without a sob in the voice and a mist in the eye. That long lane of watchers stretching two hundred miles, that lined the way by which he journeyed, silent, bareheaded, tearful. The woman who stood in the station at Wilmington (was it?) with her babe at her breast, straining her eyes for one glimpse of that stricken son of another and more aged mother, and who, when her child cried, turned instantly away, and, without a word, vanished out of sight and hearing, lest even her child's cry should disturb the sufferer—the little fellow at Elberon, who asked permission to drive one spike in the temporary track, that so he too might share the privilege of smoothing the way for the nation's patient—the cottager who, when the foreman of that same track-laying company said to him, "Sir, I fear we shall have to carry the track through yonder flower-bed," answered quickly, "Carry it through the house if it will better serve the President"—these are but one or two of uncounted and countless evi-

dences of a sympathy so tender, a generosity so eager, a gracious and beautiful unselfishness which gives one a new faith in humanity and makes him prouder of his kind.

(*b.*) But there has been more than sympathy—there has been earnest and almost universal prayer. Dear brethren, how are we to explain it? In a moment of panic on shipboard, in an earthquake, in the presence of any sudden and appalling calamity, men will fling themselves upon their knees, and cry out in an ecstasy of panic and terror. And under such circumstances, we would hardly maintain that their conduct was evidence of their faith in God, or in the power of prayer. Such an act, we might rightly say, would be apt to be more the fruit of a blind fear than of sound reason.

But in the case of the country it has been different. There has been no panic and no sudden danger to individuals or the nation. If the President were to die to-morrow, there is no one of us who believes that the government would go on otherwise than in an orderly and peaceful way, without the smallest peril to any single citizen. And yet, in spite of this absence of panic, there has been a steadily growing impulse and tendency toward prayer. These seventy days that have come and gone have not weakened, they have deepened it, and men who have not said a prayer for twenty years, have been seen, during the past week, in the House of God, and on their knees.

Surely the meaning of all this is not hard to see. Our own sympathies, by a combination of circumstances unusual and most impressive, have been ap-

pealed to in a very marked and singular way. The patient and manly sufferer, the aged mother, the heroic wife, whose fine fibre, tense as steel and steadfast as a star, is the stuff of which great nations are made—these have combined to elicit a feeling which has been a glory and beauty to the people in whom it has found expression. And what is it that has followed upon this sympathy? A steadily deepening conviction of God's sympathy. Men and women have argued from their own softened hearts up to God's heart. They have said, "If we feel in this way, how must God feel? We have a thousand things to make us hard and selfish and indifferent, that cannot possibly affect Him. And if we are so drawn together and softened by this common sorrow, surely it must make its appeal to Him, and just because He is our Father, and the President's Father, and the Father of that vast army of sufferers of whom, after all, we must not forget the President is not the chief, He cannot and will not be indifferent."

What is there now which follows inevitably from this? Keep in mind all along here, that, in accordance with the spirit of those words of David with which we began, we are arguing from our own nature up to God's. He must have a heart of sympathy, we say, because our natures are an image of His, and because, deep in even the most selfish human nature there are some possibilities of sympathy. Yes, and there is more. There is an instinct of generous response when our sympathies are appealed to. There is that—and we know perfectly well that it is the best and noblest element in our nature—

which, when another asks help of us, prompts us to give it; which, that is to say, when another prays to us, prompts us to hear his prayer, and to grant it, if we can. But He that made the ear, with which we hear another's prayer, can He not hear that prayer when it is addressed to Him? And He that made the eye, with which we see another's sorrow, and feel for it, cannot He, too, see that sorrow, and feel for it with an infinitely greater tenderness?

It is thus that those deeper instincts of the human heart, which witness to the Fatherhood of God and His sympathy with His children, are, as I read them, a stronger argument for prayer than any other. We may stumble amid the seeming contradictions between prayer and natural laws, or between a predestinating Providence and the soul's personal cry; but wider than all of them—nay, all-inclusive, and all-encompassing—is the mighty heart of God, to whose paternal consciousness all these seeming contradictions now appear, even as one day, it may be, they will appear to us, the veriest dreams of a disordered imagination.

And so let us thank God that He has given us, in our own natures, this witness of our right to pray to Him. As we hear, so the soul tells us in our doubting moments, does He who made that with which we hear, no less hearken and listen Himself. There are moments when, in some darkness, some secret, unshared trouble, you cannot speak to any one else. Do not forget, then, to speak to Him. Remember that you are His child, and refuse to live as if you were only a dumb and voiceless brute.

"For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life in the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so, the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God!"

So has wisely sung a voice which finds an echo in uncounted hearts. And the words suggest one other fact which must needs chasten our thankfulness in that evidence of a nation's faith in the power of prayer which has lately in so many ways been given to us. Unless our experience in this community has been exceptional, the observance of last Thursday was conspicuous by the absence of the one class which, of all others, is the most numerous among us. I mean the working class. Banks and shops and offices were closed, but so far as one could see, the day-laborer went as usual to his toil, and nothing was done to make it easier for him to find his way into the house of God, or to give him a chance to pray after he had done so. I do not undertake to say whose fault this is, but one thing greatly needs to be said, and that is, that no theory of social ethics is a sound one which keeps prayer, or opportunities for prayer, as the privilege of any one class or caste in the community. If we cannot stop building and loading and unloading and plowing and reaping and digging, long enough both to pray ourselves and *let our toiling fellow man kneel down beside us also*, then we had better not build or dig at all. Our foundations will be but sand, no matter how deep down we sink them. A nation which keeps religion or the offices of religion for any one part

of its people to the neglect of the rest, has begun to declare that it does not believe in God at all. For if it did, then it would remember that any system of religion which leaves out his neediest and most dependent children, is at once a mockery and a sham. "The POOR crieth and the Lord heareth him," is a promise which, as I remember it, is not made in any such general and unqualified terms to either the rich, the clever, or the respectable!

See to it then, I beseech you, just in so far as your own lot is easier or more privileged than any other, you guard the rights of that other to commune with his Maker and His Saviour. Help other men and women to pray—the servants who serve you, the laborer who toils for you, the outcast whose soul no man cares for, though philanthropy may feed his body—by keeping sacred for these some hours of approach to God. In their interests, as well as in your own, guard Sunday from the hands that, upon whatsoever pretense, would make it no different from any other day. You want and they want, believe me, to be drawn nearer to their unseen Father. These are prosperous times they tell us; but oh, what sorrow there must be in human homes when life is held so cheaply, and when men and women who have not the heart to face their cheerless future are ending it so soon and so awfully. What must they think—these poor, benighted ones, of the Father who is over them? Do they believe in Him at all? Do they care to find Him and to be helped by Him? And yet, in all their blind groping and stumbling and falling, they are your brothers and sisters, and mine, and He who prayed for them from His cross is praying for them still.

Be it ours to pray for them no less. There are clouds about our own pathway, it may be, that do not break or lift. We have prayed for light, and yet it has not come. Let us think, now and then, if it be so of those whose way is darker even than our own. Let us learn not only to pray, but to pray unselfishly for them; for so—I know not by what strange alchemy it is, but, believe me, it is true—so shall we often find our own doubts hushed, our own fears dispelled, and our darkness turning into day. Forgetting ourselves for a little in thought and prayer for others, we shall find that He whose name is Love has not forgotten us!

OUR

DEAD PRESIDENT.

(Preached Sunday Morning, Sept. 25th, 1881.)

Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles!—Ecclesiastes x, 17.

It is a king himself who writes these words, and whose ancestry, only a single step backwards, found its root in a royalty no nobler nor more imperial than a shepherd's boy. For Solomon is the preacher here, and the father of Solomon was David, the shepherd lad of Bethlehem.

And so, when he writes, "Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles," we know that in his thought there is something more and greater than the mere nobility of rank, or the titled eminence that comes with ancient and lofty lineage. Such a lineage is not without its blessings, and it is only a prejudiced and unintelligent judgment that can despise its value. If we believe that a pure strain, that courage and endurance and a kindly disposition may be passed on by a horse or a dog, it is a stupid and unreflecting radicalism that despises the same principle when it is applied to men. To be born of noble and kingly parentage ought to carry with it something of the instincts of nobility, even if always it does not; and we Republicans do not need to disparage a princely lineage, even though in dispensing once for all with kings and princes and nobles and the privileges of inherited rank, we have found, as we believe, "a wiser and more excellent way."

But while this is true, it is, as I have implied, of nobility in some larger and loftier sense that Solomon is speaking here. Behind all character there are enduring principles, and it is by these principles, handed on often from sire to son, but developed for the first time sometimes by him in whom they are illustrated, that greatness is nurtured, and the truest kingship achieved. We see, now and then, men of the humblest lineage, as the world reckons such things, who mount to the loftiest eminence from lowliest and most obscure beginnings, and we see all along, in the history of such men, certain dominant aspirations, certain clear convictions, a faith and courage and majesty of rectitude which rule and mould them from the beginning. Such men, whatever their origin, seem to be born of great truths and nurtured by grand ideas. In the womb of these their intellects were nourished, their wills disciplined, and their consciences enlightened. If we go back to the mothers who bore them, no matter in what humble station they lived and toiled and nourished their little ones, the same noble qualities appear, and these are the influences that rule and mould the man. Such a man, in whatever high station he stands, is great and noble, because he is, most of all, the son of noble beliefs and noble convictions.

It is such a man that this nation mourns to-day, and whose memory we honor, not merely or only because he was President, but because kinglier than his official position, more royal than his ancestry or lineage, noble and heroic as is the mother who bore him, was the man himself. And of him I would speak this morning, not so much in a strain of grief

or with the thought of our common bereavement, as in thankfulness to the Providence who gave him to us, and in gratitude for the benediction of his example. With a wise appropriateness the Church and the State unite in calling us to-morrow to a day of humiliation and fasting and prayer. Our past as a nation is not so stainless that we do not need to humble ourselves. Our present is not so cloudless or so aspiring that we do not need both to discipline and ennoble it by fasting. Our future is not so secure that we may not wisely and earnestly pray for a loftier guidance and a more unerring wisdom than our own. But, meantime, the life and work of our dead President are completed, and as the nation watches round his bier, every citizen in it of kin to him who is gone in this common grief of ours, and every man, woman, and child a mourner, let us gather the lessons of a royal life, and bless God to-day that our dead king was the son of nobles.

Happily, our theme for these few moments is bounded and circumscribed by this place and this hour. It is not mine to speak of Mr. Garfield as a teacher, a man of letters, a soldier, or a statesman. Nor am I called to sketch the romance of his swift and sure ascent, with no step backward in it all, from the tow-path to the White House. These are aspects of his history which will get abundant recognition elsewhere, and which are in no danger of being lost sight of in the eulogy of the forum or the pages of books and newspapers. But, howsoever worthy of commemoration they may be, and most surely they belong to the history of our time, and of this people, they are largely foreign to those interests and truths

for which the pulpit exists to witness, and with which it should chiefly be concerned. In this place, at any rate, it is of moment to ask, not how high a man climbed, nor from whence; not how many offices he held, nor how soon he grasped them; not even how much learning adorned him, nor how gracefully he used it; but behind and within all this scaffolding of outward activities, how grew the man himself? What of his character in its inmost fibre and quality —not what did he do? but what did he come to be, and how? What of the Godward side of the man—that side of every man which was made to reach out and up—his moral nature, his faith in the unseen; his wealth in that kind of character which, when we come to open the pages of the New Testament, seems oftenest to confront us there. It is of these aspects of the life and work of our dead President of which I would speak to-day. In other words, I would recall this morning, and this morning bless God for, his good example: (*a*), of fidelity; (*b*), of manly Christian faith; and then (*c*), of Christian heroism and patience.

(*a.*) Says the great apostle to the Gentiles, writing to the Church at Corinth: "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful," and when St. John is gathering up for our instruction those wonderful echoes of the Apocalyptic vision which came to him on Patmos, he is bidden to write: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." What a faithful life it was that breathed itself out at Elberon last Monday! That story of the orphan lad fighting his way through every difficulty—first to an education and then to eminence in three distinct

vocations—teacher, soldier, statesman—and genuinely great in all of them, what is there in it that so much enlists us as its fidelity? There are men who advance to eminence, borne on from the outset by gifts of genius and force of will, which make distinction inevitable. But the ruler whom we have lost was in no sense a man of genius, and had a nature as gentle and considerate as a woman's. He did not climb up simply by thrusting others down, and he did not achieve without the strain and toil of brave and faithful endeavor. In a sketch of him from the pen of an Englishman, there occurs an incident which, until I read it there, was new to me, and which I venture to recall here, though to some of you it may be familiar, because it illustrates so aptly this special quality of General Garfield's habitual fidelity:

At an early period in our late war, the State of Kentucky was threatened with invasion by a large body of Confederate troops, who had, in fact, some 5,000 of them, already crossed its eastern border. In December, Colonel Garfield (as he then was) was ordered to report himself and his regiment to General Buell, at Louisville. The historian of the Forty-second Regiment relates his interview with Buell and the result:—In the evening Colonel Garfield reached Louisville and sought General Buell at his headquarters. He found a cold, silent, austere man, who asked a few direct questions, revealed nothing, and eyed the new-comer with a curious, searching expression, as though trying to look into the untried Colonel and see whether he would succeed or fail. Taking a map, General Buell pointed

out the position of Marshall's forces in Eastern Kentucky, marked the locations in which the Union troops in that district were posted, explained the nature of the country, and then dismissed his visitor with this remark: "If you were in command of the sub-department of Eastern Kentucky, what would you do? Come here to-morrow at nine o'clock, and tell me." Colonel Garfield returned to his hotel, procured a map of Kentucky, the last Census Report, paper, pen and ink, and sat down to his task. He studied the roads, resources and population of every county in Eastern Kentucky. At daylight he was still at work, and had been at work all night, but at nine o'clock in the morning he was at headquarters with a sketch of his plans. Having read the paper carefully, General Buell made it the basis of an immediate order, placing Garfield in command of a brigade of four regiments of infantry and a battalion of cavalry, and ordered him to Eastern Kentucky to expel Marshall's force in his own way. The result of this appointment was the battle of Mill Creek, the first victory gained by the Union troops in that part of the country, and this by men inferior in numbers to the troops to whom they were opposed, and who had never before been under fire.

The significance of such an incident as this is larger than at first appears. It is the eternal law that he who has been faithful over a few things shall be made ruler over many things; and it was here the fidelity in the immediate task which opened the way for those larger honors and responsibilities that lay beyond it. To do that task well, nay, best—not to slight it, nor to shirk it—to turn on the

problem given him to solve every light at his command, and then to sit up all night working at its solution, this revealed a manhood whose strongest instinct—nay, whose settled habit had come to be fidelity. Think back, now, along the earlier history of the young soldier (for he was then scarce thirty years of age), and remember by what earlier fidelity that habit had been strengthened and disciplined. To do his duty, and to do it with his whole heart, this seems to have been the eager purpose of boy and man alike.

And so it came to pass that other men trusted and leaned upon him. He never addressed himself to any question without doing his best to master it, and the thoroughness with which he wrought has been one of his characteristics which has, I think, been but partially and imperfectly appreciated. He was not an elegant scholar, and little inaccuracies of his in a Latin quotation, for instance, have led some of us to smile at the claim which others made for him of eminent culture. But he had something better than the learning of mere technical accuracy or literary nicety: he had the learning which reveals that a man has mastered what he is talking about. His financial speeches are a striking illustration of this, disclosing a knowledge of the history of finance in older nations, which is equally rare and valuable. But he only got this, as alone he got other things, by digging for them. He had a ready command of words, but they were worth listening to, because he had packed into them the result of long-continued and painstaking assiduity. And hence it was that honors sought him, and larger burdens

were given him to bear. It did not matter what task was assigned to him; no sooner was he called to it than it became a trust, and he himself a steward who must give account.

I take it, this is the practical difference between those who do the work of life and those who fail to do it. Make every allowance that utmost charity can claim for feeble powers and narrow brains and broken health and inherited disabilities, and the fact remains that the world divides itself into the faithful and the faithless—those who face their work and those who evade it. And so, at last, when the account is made up and the verdict pronounced, it runs, not "Well done, good and"—not good-natured, or eloquent, or well-meaning, but "Well done, good and *faithful* servant."

(*b.*) In President Garfield this fidelity was united to —ought I not rather to say it was rooted in—a manly and courageous Christian faith. A manly and courageous Christian faith, I say, for there were features in the religious life of our late Chief Magistrate which were in many respects exceptional. It is not uncommon for public men to be, at any rate, nominal Christians, and to indicate their belief by at least acquiescence in Christian usages and traditions. But in General Garfield there was something more than acquiescence in something more than a tradition. He belonged to a communion whose name was by the great majority of people unknown until they heard it in connection with him, and whose tenets and fellowship were alike obscure. It was a communion utterly without prestige either of numbers, wealth or influence. A man may be proud to be

of the Methodists or Baptists, because they are so numerous, or to be of the Presbyterians, because they are so orthodox and respectable, or to be a Churchman, because it is so historic, or a Unitarian, because they are so clever ; but to be a member of that little and obscure sect that called itself the Church of the Disciples, with its brief history and simple rites, and meagre and homely brotherhood, there was no distinction in that, but rather something which, to superficial minds, might seem to border upon the reverse. And so it was to the honor of the President that all along he clung to that earlier fellowship in which, in the first flush of his opening manhood, he had found his way into the enkindling fellowship of his Master and Saviour. In that humble communion there seem to have been good men who strongly influenced his childhood and youth alike. He never forgot them. He turned to them, all along, with deepening reverence and gratitude, and his love for his Bible, his habit of getting wisdom and strength for each day's duties on his knees, which he had early learned of these men, these, too, he never forgot or outgrew. It is the vice of our American manhood that in matters of religion it is so often so furtive and secretive. We are ashamed to be seen reading a good book, and, most of all, to be seen reading the best book. A merchant who should keep a copy of the two Testaments at his elbow would be thought, by many people, a fanatic or a Pharisee. And yet he would find better advice in either of them, often, than he would get from the most learned treatise on banking or the most profound disquisition on laws of exchange.

Has it ever occurred to us why there has been such rare earnestness and reality in all our praying for the President? Though we have not been conscious of it, I am persuaded that it has been because, in the common heart and thought of the people, there has been the deep sub-consciousness that he for whom they were praying believed in prayer himself, and that while they were asking God to heal him, he himself was trying every hour to say, in the spirit of that Master who said it Himself, and who taught us all to say it, Not as I will, but as Thou wilt: Thy will be done!

(*c*). And this brings me naturally and obviously to speak of that last trait in the leader whom we have lost, which, as I think, it belongs to us in this place pre-eminently to recall. It has been said that if the President had died on the day that he was shot down by the assassin's hand, the outburst of indignation would have been far fiercer, but that the feeling elicited would have been alike more ephemeral and more circumscribed. It is not difficult to see why. Never was there a nobler triumph of the grace of patience than in this man. There is a great deal that seemed trivial or insignificant at the time that it happened, which now, looking back on it, we can estimate at its true worth. The playful greeting with which he welcomed his friends to the sick-chamber, the cheery word or look, that at the time we took for tokens how much less grave was the emergency than we dreaded; ah! how different they all read now! To bear pain is hard enough, and men who can be brave in danger, and can endure without a quiver some brief opera-

tion, are apt to break down very soon in those long stretches of suffering which women have oftener to bear than men, and which they bear usually so much better. But here was a sufferer whose patience and courage were co-equal. Remember what message he sent from his sick room to the wife who was hastening to his side: "The President is wounded—how seriously he cannot tell. He asks that you should come to him, and sends you his love." No note of panic—no half savage shriek of command—innate dignity, sweetness, self-control, tenderest thought for another. And so it was all along. When they lifted him into the car at Washington, some awkward hand jarred the stretcher against the door-way. A pang of intense pain flashed its brief signal across the face of the sufferer—how keen a sufferer we know, now that we have read the story of that pierced and shattered spine—but no more—no word of impatience or complaint. And later on, when the wasted invalid is lifted for a brief vision of the sea—fit symbol of that wider ocean on which he was so soon to launch—as the passing sentinel, catching a glimpse of the President, straightway salutes his commander-in-chief, the old instinct of courtesy carries the shadowy hand to the visor, and once more the brave and patient sufferer forgets himself. Ah! my brothers, this sweet and steady self-command! this tireless and heroic patience!—these were the noblest of all. We lift our eyes from that sick bed to the cross of One who was once wounded and who suffered for us all. And it is the same spectacle of patient and uncomplaining suffering that at once wins and conquers us there! To

do, that were indeed noble if there were nothing nobler in life. But to bear, to lie still and patiently endure, that is grander still!

And so we thank God to-day for that good example of this His servant, who has finished a course so heroic. Fidelity in duty, faith in Christ, and patience in suffering, surely these are the elements out of which the most lasting greatness is builded! Blessed, thrice blessed, oh land, whose king is the son of such nobilities as these. Kingly verily he was who could prove his right to rule by gifts so royal as these! Who shall say that they or he have done their glorious work? As we stand to-day and look down into that open grave where to-morrow he is to be laid amid the tears and lamentations of fifty millions of people, who shall say that his kingly work is ended? That vigorous intellect, those generous sympathies, that patient courage, that simple and reverent faith—are all these forever hushed and stilled? As the low-browed portal swings upon its hinges, does it open upon nothing beyond? "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! And one answered me saying, What are these which are arrayed in white raiment, and whence come they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, these are they which came out of great tribulation." The long fight is ended. The bitterness of death is passed. Standing some of them in low places and some of them in high ones, bearing their burden, doing their task, owning their Lord,

they have toiled and striven and endured, and so have fallen asleep. And, therefore, tarrying but a little in their earthly resting places, they stand, at last, before the throne of God; they serve him day and night in his temple, and "He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." No pang can touch them now. "They shall hunger no more; neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them; nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

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